

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DAMASC 02488 021320Z
ACTION MCE-00

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 DODE-00 EB-08 NSAE-00
TRSE-00 SOE-02 DOE-15 CIAE-00 COME-00 PM-05 SP-02
SS-15 INR-10 ICAE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 /068 W
-----129827 021326Z /72
O 021247Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7850

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: MILI, SY, MASS, ESTC
SUBJ: MINISTRY OF INTERIOR PURCHASE OF COLT PISTOLS

REF: A) STATE 99857; B) DAMASCUS 1990

1. SARG MINISTER OF INTERIOR ADNAN DABBAGH ASKED COMMERCIAL OFFICER TO CALL ON HIM MAY 2 TO DISCUSS US DENIAL OF EXPORT LICENSE FOR COLT PISTOLS (REF B). MINISTER EXPLAINED TO COMOFF THAT HE ENTERED INTO A CONTRACT WITH LOCAL AGENT (MR. HALLACK, REF. B) (CIRCA JANUARY 25) TO PURCHASE 200 GOLD-PLATED COLT "COBRA" 38 CALIBER PISTOLS, PLUS 10,000 ROUNDS OF AMMUNITION. AGENT PURCHASED GUNS END OF FEBRUARY FROM COMAPNY CALLED LEVENDOS INTERNATIONAL. ON APRIL 25 AGENT WAS INFORMED BY LEVENDOS THAT OFFICE OF MUNITIONS CONTROL HAD DENIED AN EXPORT LICENSE FOR SHIPMENT OF GUNS. (ACCORDING TO REF A, LICENSE NO. 54495-- PISTOLS, WAS DENIED LEVENDOS ON MARCH 27, 1978).

2. MINISTER EXPLAINED THAT IS WAS HIS CUSTOM TO GIVE PISTOLS AS GIFTS FOR VISITING ARAB AND FOREIGN DIGNITARIES. THIS PARTICULAR ORDER WAS INTENDED AS GIFTS FOR PARTICIPANTS OF A CONVENTION OF ARAB POLICE OFFICERS, TO BE HELD IN DAMASCUS MAY 13-18. HE OBSERVED THAT THE MINISTRY HAD LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PURCHASED SIMILAR GUNS FROM BOTH COLT AND SMITH AND WESSON IN THE PAST, AND WAS CONCERNED THAT THE REJECTION OF THE EXPORT LICENSE THIS TIME STEMMED FROM "POLITICAL" CONSIDERATIONS. HE REQUESTED EMBASSY'S URGENT ASSISTANCE IN SETTLING THE MATTER.

3. COMOFF INFORMED MINISTER THAT EMBASSY DID NOT KNOW

REASONS FOR DENIAL BUT TO ITS KNOWLEDGE NO POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS WERE INVOLVED IN THE REJECTION OF THE EXPORT LICENSE. COMOFF PROMISED MINISTER WE WOULD SEEK CLARIFICATION ASAP AND ATTEMPT TO FACILITATE RECONSIDERATION OF MC APPLICATION AND EARLY SHIPMENT.

4. COMMENTS AND ACTION REQUESTED: EMBASSY RESTATES ARGUMENTS REF. B, AND REQUESTS THAT LICESNE BE GRANTED ASAP TO ALLOW RECEIPT OF PISTOLS IN DAMASCUS BY MAY 18. EMBASSY SUGGESTS THAT CONTACT BE ESTABLISHED WITH SYRIAN EMBASSY CONCERNING THIS MATTER (SARG MINISTER OF INTERIOR HAS PROMISED TO INFORM HIS EMBASSY). EMBASSY WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE ASAP ANY BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON ORIGINAL LICENSE REJECTION. PELLETREAU

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Message Attributes

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Concepts: SMALL ARMS, MILITARY SALES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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